

Nepal

Historical Study of a Hindu Kingdom

(Volume III)

-Sylvain Levi

1. Inscription of the pillar of Changu Narayan

The pillar of Changu Narayan was discovered by Bhagvanlal Indrajī who stamped and published in part the inscription. Unfortunately the priest of the temple where this pillar is preserved did not allow the Pundit to extricate inferior portion which was buried in the soil. The Bhagvanlal was then only able to procure the 17 first lines of the face I, 17 of the face II and 20 of the face III. Before my departure to India Georges Buhler who was to meet with a tragic end a little while after very particularly recommended to my attention the incomplete inscription; he persuaded me, if I obtained permission to enter Nepal to multiply the measures so as to bring away a complete stamping. I have already (vol. II, 388; 404) how the good-will of the Darbar facilitated my task; the enlightened zeal of Maharaja Bir Sham Sher was able to triumph over the refusal and menaces of the priest of Changu Narayan. The access to the temple it is true, remained prohibited for a reason of childish rancour; but the Gurkha soldiers whom I had trained, succeeded in un-

earthing the base of the pillar without damaging it and in taking several stampings of the whole inscription.

I was able from the enclosure of the temple to view the pillar that I was not allowed to approach; I have shown it on the photograph reproduced 1,231. The description supplied by Bhagvanlal is perfectly exact; it is situated on the left (of the spectator) of the gate of the temple of Changu Narayan; the lower half is square the top is at first octagonal in shape than each one of the sides divides itself and the summit is circular. The ruins of the ancient crest and of the Garuda that crowned it are still preserved in a kind of open-work cage in the middle of the entrance courtyard; the lotus and the cakra that have replaced the primitive crowning for about fifty years now, are seen on the photograph. The architecture of the pillar very closely that of Harigaon (key, photograph, 11,119); paleography also brings together the two inscriptions

The inscription of Changu Narayan is engraved with great care on three of the four facings. The inscribed part covers on facing I, a

height of 0,80; on facing 11, of 0,80; on facing 111 of 0,92, divided respectively in 26 lines (1), 24 lines, (11), 28 lines (111). The width of the lines on the three facing is uniformly 0m.34c. The characters have on an average a height of 0,012 on facing 1, of 0,011 on the two others; the space between the lines is about 0,22 on the first two facings; on the 111, it is irregular and goes increasing to the end, with a width of 0,018 to 0,026.

The writing is clearly and without any possible doubt of the Gupta Type. The observations of detail would scarcely double those that I will present in connection with the pillar of Harigaon. Among the most characteristic letters, I shall be satisfied to cite the initial (11,15; 111,4;9;16) formed by two dots disposed vertically and by a vertical stroke on the right, the ha, closed on the right of the scribe the sa with its large curl the dha oval the tha completely rounded the bha with the angle well open. Bhagvanlal (and Buhler who has translated his article) had already observed that "the shape of the letters concord exactly with those of the Gupta inscription." Yet, Mr. Fleet did not hesitate to set down the date of that inscription to the beginning of the VIIIth century (705 J. C.) immediately before Civa-deva(11)and Jayadeva; the eminent epigraphist has found himself on this occasion, induced to deny the evidence of the paleographical testimony, to support a chronological combination abandoned today. It was in the thereabouts of the Vth century that paleography tended to classify Manadeva as Bhagvanlal had done and Buhler who interpreted the date of the inscription by the Vikrama era (386 samvat -329 J. C.) at the very epoch of Samudragupta "whose edicts on pillars totally resemble the inscriptions of Manadeva" (some considerations on the History of Nepal, p. 50) We shall soon have to discuss the details of the date.

The inscription is in Sanscrit and with the exception of the two first lines wherein is stated the date, it is in verse. Each one of the stanzas shows in the margin its number of order indicated in numeral letters. The metre employed from one end to the other is the cardulavikridita, which the poet handles with great ease. In default of an original or brilliant imagination the author possesses after all his trade of versification; his language is pure and simple. He does not abuse of long compounds; he rarely reaches and does not exceeds a grouping of seven words. His lexicon is classical. The word "nirbhi" (11,16) is missing it is true, to P. W.; but P. W. cites the word with a reference to Caraka. The word apastra "weapon for defense" (111,1) is not mentioned in P. W. Bhagvanlal notes as an impropriety (of language) the use of the causative "karaya" for the ordinary (11,8; rajyam putraka karaya) but his criticism is wrong. The expression rajyam karya is at least consecrated by traditional verses on the reign of Rama, attested in Sanscrit by the Ramayana VI, 130, 104; the Maha Bharata VII, 2244 (and key 111, 11219, the Harivamca 2354;

Ramo rajyam akarayat

and at the same time in pali by the Jataka 461 (Dacaratha jo)

Ramo rojjam akarayi

The Ramayan employs elsewhere again the same expression p. ex as regard the Dilipa (1,42,8th ed. Bombay);

raja rajyam akarayat.

The art of writing in its whole is extremely correct; the mistakes pointed out by Bhagvanlal are the 'lapsus calumi' (slips of the pen, of the Pundit himself. The so-called correction abhidanat sati (11,1) is based on a wrong sense; the construction is literally. "The queen Rajyavati would be Cri in person being having

designation of spouse of the king". Sati which follows abhidana is not an ordinary platitude but marks well in accordance to usage the function of the epithet of the preceding term. The bha of bharttuh 11,17 is very clearly traced and does not resemble a ka. The correction indicated in 11, 14 pranā is without reason; the text as well as the facsimile and the transcription of Bhagvanlal write this word correctly. The correction satvo ribhīh for prajñatasatvora bhīh underlines only an error of reading (111,1); the text clearly shows satpaurush which is quite correct. In short (111,19) it is useless to substitute esyaty to ecyaty because the text bears esyaty clearly traced. I do not intend besides to diminish by these verifications the well known merit of Bhagvanlal who was a remarkable decipherer full of wisdom and knowledge.

It is proper to observe that the inscription of Changu Narayan carefully redoubles the mute after r, and classifies itself accordingly in the series anterior to Amcvarman. It notes the last syllable by a character of lesser dimension traced below the level of the line, whereas with Civadeva (1) and Amcvarman one can see the dash of the virama traced either above or below the letter.

The inscription commemorates a donation to the God of Changu Narayan (Hari, 1,6) made by queen Rajyavati on the advice of her son king Manadeva in consequence of a victorious campaign that led this prince to the west of Nepal proper, beyond the Gandaki as far as the stronghold of the refractory Malla. I have already commented on this inscription from a historical point of view (11,99 sqq). The purpose of the donation is not clearly expressed; it concerns undoubtedly the pillar itself shown by the demonstrative that 'this' at the end of the inscription. The custom of erect-

ing commemorative pillars dates in India as far back as the emperor Acoka. The Guptas their neighbours and their successors have renewed or perpetuated this practice. The most remarkable example is the *pracasti* of Samudragupta in Allahabad, engraved on a pillar of Acoka himself. The most ordinary designation of these pillars is the word *stambha*; one also finds *yasti* (*lat*) applied in an inscription of Hastin and Carvanatha (Fleet *ib*, 253; Skandagupta ? in Hihar; Manadeva himself employs this word to designate the pillars erected by his father, the *picus Dharmadeva*; 111,5). The custom is as much *Civitic* (Manaleca in Badami) as it is *Vicnutic* (*candra* in Mehrauli; Budhagupta in Eran) or *Jaina* (*kahaun* days of Skandagupta), or *Buddhistic* (*simhavarman* in Amaravati). In the *Vichnustic* worship at least the pillar is compared to a standard of the god (*visnor dhvajah sthapitah* in Mehrauli, *Janardanasy dhvajastambah* in Eran). The erection of the pillar is usually designated as in the following inscription *ucchritaih*, 111,5) by the verb *ucchray*. By a coincidence which is not perhaps only due to chance, the inscription of Changu Narayan recalls two inscriptions on the pillar of Skandagupta. One of them in Bhitari celebrates this prince, "he who after his father had gone to heaven, restored the Laksmi of his submerged race, subjugated his enemy and hailing out to himself". Here am I the master "went full of joy to seek his mother whose eyes were filled with tears, like *krsna* with Devaki" (1.12-14; *pitari divam upele viplutam vamcalaksmim bhujabalavijitariryyah pratisthapyā bhuyah* [1] *jitam iti paritosaṃ mataram sasranettram hataripur iva Krsno Devakim abhyupetaḥ* [11]). The tableau and the very expressions evoke the interview of Manadeva with his mother Rajyavati and denote undoubtedly the imitation of the same model. The other inscription which is badly mutilated (in Bihar) allows to appear the

person of the king's mother (1,12). These two inscriptions are classified in the second half of the Vth century. A century after the inscription of Managaleca in Badami presents an analogy a little further in difference from the inscription of Changu Narayan. King Mangaleca on the return from a great victory won over the Kalat-suri Buddharaja makes an offering to (Civa) Mukutecvara and engraves his donation on commemorative pillar. The inscription drawn up in a clever prose celebrates at first the ancestors of the king, as does Manadeva at Changu Narayan; then comes the eulogy of the king, lastly the narrator passes to the account of the circumstances of the donation, by an almost identical movement on either side (kim bahuna, Badami, 1.10...kim vakyair bbahubhih, Changu III, 20). The king who had at heart the impatience of erecting a commemorative pillar of the victory of his power (caktijayastambha), considered that it was first essential to erect the javelin of a pillar in commemoration of the triumph of piety (dhammajayastambhacakti... ..he summoned the spouse of his father, queen Durlabhadevi and said to her; Let his concern you. Present as an offering to Makutecvara Natha these things ... (the enumeration follows).

The inscription of Changu Narayan is dated from "Samvat 386 in the month of Jyaistha clear fortnight first day of the moon, the Moon being associated to the asterism Rohini in the auspicious moment of Abhijit "Bhagvanlal without stopping at the details of the date had examined the interpretation of the year in the point of view of the chronology supplied by the Vamcavalis. He had reduced on the one hand to the caka-era (464 J.C.) on the other to the Vikrama era (329 J.C.) then finding that the average of the reigns between Manadeva and Jayadeva was more probable in the second system than in the first, he had prefer-

red the Vikrama era. The procedure is always a delicate matter; applied to the Vamcavalis of Nepal, so whimsical in their chronological speculations, it was already doomed to failure. Mr. Fleet has taken up the examination at a later period of the ancient chronology of Nepal basing himself on the date 316 of Civa deva (I) given by the inscription of the Golmadhitol that Mr. Bendall had recently discovered and published. I leave aside the discussion of this system which I have already criticised in an article of the Asiatic Journal in 1894. Mr. Fleet, admitting that the inscriptions of Nepal are divided into the two parallel series using different eras mentions the inscription of Changu Narayan in the Gupta era; he thus obtains 396 Gupta, 705-706 J. C., 628 caka current or 627 caka lapsed. Starting from this datum Sh. B. Dikshit has verified the details of the date for Mr. Fleet he found that "the given tithi ended on Tuesday the 28th April 705 J. C. at 57 ghatas 12 palas after the rising of the Sun; that the nakshatra Krttika lasted till the 11 ghatas 3 palas after the rising of the sun the morrow Wednesday and that consequently the muhurta Abhijit which is the eight in the series of the muhurtas and which begins then with the 15th ghata reckoned from the rising of the sun has been produced as is wanted by the text of the inscription whilst the nakshatra Rohini was current" (Gupta Inscr. Intod. 93-95).

As often is the case of the so-called scientific arguments introduced in the researches of history and of philology the proof proves nothing. The details of the date, in spite of their number leaves nothing precise to verification. The position given far from being accidental is almost even or at least very frequent. In fact the month of Jaistha is the month in which the Moon most be full in the constellation of Jyestha; then at the New

Moon that precedes the longitude of the Moon must be 180 less. The space between Jyestha and Rohini being 187 and the displacement of the Moon being 12 by tithi they are good chances that the Moon may pass in Rohini in the course of the first tithi (pratipad) of Jyaishta. Further the Muhurta Abhijit (Vidhi or Brahma) is the eight of the fifteen muhurtas of the day or of the thirty muhurtas that go from the rising of the Sun to the next rising; each muhurta lasts 48 minutes. Then at the moment when begins Abhijit 7x46-336 minutes-5 hours and 36 minutes have lapsed since the rising of the distance of the Moon from Jyestha has thus reduced by a little less than 30 and its position has more chances again of being in the region of the nakshatra Rohini. Besides if it concerns astronomical arguments it must be observed that the solution calculated by Dikshit and adopted by Fleet is irreconcilable with the intercalation of Asadha in 449 supplied by one of our inscriptions. If 386 samvat is equivalent to 628 caka current 449 is equivalent then to 691 caka current; then on that year there is an intercalation of Jyaishta in the true system of vaicakha in the average system but none of Asadha. If as I believe 449 with its intercalary system corresponds to 482 caka current 386 would answer to 419 caka current. Then the first Jyaishta of 419 caka current at the moment the sun is rising is found in Rohini and there remains for it to run $\frac{139}{10000}$ lunations in this nakshatra otherwise expressed it must still remain in it 12 hours 23 minutes. Since the muhurta Abhijit commences 5 hours 35

minutes after the rising the Moon is still in Rohini during this muhurta. The date of the pillar of Changu Narayan corresponds in this hypothesis to Tuesday the 1st May 496 J. C.

This date does not satisfy the astronomical data of the inscription; it is also in accord with the paleographical character. Besides, outside the particular considerations that I have already brought forward or that I will have to cite afterwards as regard other inscription one fact alone suffices to classify definitely Manadeva before Amcuvarman; thanks to the control offered by the inscription of the Yagbahal we are assured that the cri Mana vihara comprised in the list of the liberalities of Amcuvarman (Harigaon, year 32) is really the Manadeva vihara the monastery founded by Mana deva at Patan. The same inscription designates also a Manecvara a Dhara Manecvara that are probably pious foundations of Mana deva. The Managrha in which the Lichavis kings after Mana deva date their order and that is also found mentioned in Amcuvarman (Harigaon, year 30; I. 10) is undoubtedly the place erected by Mana deva.

Note: In the transcription of this inscription as also of the following I indicate by think-faced letters the characters that in the original writing are traced above the line and reduced in dimensions; this graphic procedure corresponds to the use of the use of the virama in the modern alphabets.

The italic marks the doubtful letters.

Txt. I

Samvat 386 Jyaishtamase Cuklapakse partipadi 1, etc.

Refer to "Nepal" vol III. by S. Levi, page 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

(Footnote page 10 Nepal, vol III, by S. Levi)

L2 Bhagvanlal wrongly transcribes nakshatra

L4 The syllable "sta" is legible on the stamping, after "vaksah". The conjecture "sma" "rttr" of Bhagvanlal seems to me impossible of reconciliation with the visible traces on the stamping.

Translation of text

1.11 & 111 that appears on pages 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, of 'Nepal' vol III, by S. Levi.

I

(1-2) year 386, month of Jyaistha clear fortnight first days of the lunation, 1, the Moon being associated with the nakshatra Rohini in the suspicious time of the Abhijit.*

1. The Crivatsa is imprinted on the graceful resplendence of his large and vast chest; his chest his breasts his arms (of lotus) shine; he feasts .. the three worlds are the machine of rotation which (he) turns .. for his continuous distraction, he the imperishable. The Doladei is his residence. Long live he who worship the eyes always open the gods, Hari.

2 ..by his majesty by his riches he diminished his strength; such was king Vrsadeva the incomparable; his promise was verified by his performances; like the sun is a mass of dazzling rays he was; ..of his well behaved sons, clever very proud without caprices subdued to discipline.

3. His son, master of a prosperous empire invincible to his enemies in fights was the king named Caukaradeva ..very liberal sincere hearted .. by his valiance his charity his happiness his riches he acquired a great renown .. he protected the land by esteemed lieutenants similar to the king of wild beasts.

4. His (son) excellent in virtues acts... clever law-abiding or rather the law himself

L5 The syllable "riti" is fairly legible after "yantrava"

L6 The facsimile of Bhagvanlal really redoubles the 'c' of arocya; but his transcription in Devnagari bears by error 'roya'

L10 The conjecture of Bhagvanlal 'khyatair vineta' is unacceptable because one would have had 'vrini' with redoubling of the 'v' after 'r'

(Foot Note to page 12; 'Nepal', vol. III by S. Levi)

L6 The final 'm' of divam is clearly traced, it is by error that Bhagvanlal reads and transcribes 'divam'

L13 Bhagvanlal transcribes in devnagari 'chogair mama' without redoubling the 'm' after the 'r'; but his facsimile corrects this inexactitude

L17 The reading 'atamanah' by Bhagvanlal is certainly wrong.

(Foot Note to page 13; 'Nepal', vol III, by S. Levi)

L1 The stamping shows very clearly 'satpaurusah instead of the 'satrouru (bhib) of Bhagvanlal.

L18 The two syllables shown above line 18 on the facsimile of Bhagvanlal correspond to nothing in the original.

(Foot Note to page 14; 'Nepal', vol III, by S. Levi)

L19 The stamping shows clearly the correct form esyaty instead of the reading ecyaty of Bhagvanlal

L28 Bhagvanlal wrongly reads vvidhatragaditah. The characters crthatra are very precise.

* The epithet of pracasta "extolled recommended" applied to Abhijit is not an ordinary literary ornament. A verse of the Matsya Purana cited by the cabdakalpa drama from where Goldtucker borrowed it, expressly recommends the Abhijit of the donation;

aparahren tu samprapte Abhijid Rauhiodaye
yad atra deyate jautos tad aksayam udhrtam.

"when the afternoon arrives Abhijit is produced in Rohini the gift that is made to declared imperishable."

aspiring to sagacity excellent in qualities was the king Dharmadeva. The law itself had nominated him as heir to a great kingdom; his wisdom enriched the history of royal saints, in rejoicing the heart of men.

5. He shone well; .. to the gods his aims his successes, were perfect he possessed purity of body and heart; this prince shone like the Moon. His spouse who had the purity of the race and of riches was the good Rajyavati... like the good laksmi of Hari.

6. After having.....with the rays of his fame illuminated the whole world the king of men left to the sojourn of heaven as he would to a walk in the park; beaten, tormented with fever..... she languished she who loved the rites foster-fathers of the gods, before she was separated from him.

II

7. Queen Rajyavati who bears the name of spouse of this king will in reality Cri in person come after him searching for an occasion to look at him she in whom was born the irreproachable hero king Manadeva, who ... like the lunar star in autumn... refreshed the world at all times.

8. She came to find him with a sobbing voice deep sighings, the face all in tears and she said to her son tenderly "your father is gone to heaven. As my son now that your father has departed what shall I do with life? Exercise my son the royalty. I from today will follow your father.

9. What will I do with the chains of hope wrought by the infinite variety of pleasures to live without my husband in this world in which the meeting again appears like an illusion or a dream. I am going "Thus resolute her sorrowful son pressed her feet with his head by affection and spoke to her thus not without pain.

10. "What will I do with the pleasures? what will I wish to be the first to stop living; after me you can go to heaven. Thus speaking the threads of his words strung inside the lotus of his mouth and mingled with the water of the tears enveloped her like a small bird that is captured in the net.

11. In company with her son she accomplished in person the funeral rites for her husband; virtue charity chastity abstinences, the holy abstinences had purified her heart; she entirely distributed to the Brahmans her fortune in order to increase the merits of her husband; she only had him at heart during the sacred ceremonies; like Arundhati incarnated.

12. And his son treasure of virtue of valour of nobility patient loved by his subjects he acts without speaking he smiles while speaking he is always the first to wish he is energetic without pride; one cannot say that he has not attained the highest knowledge of the world; he is the friend of the afflicted and of orphans; he loves his guests: he causes his solicitors to forget their susceptibilities.

III

13. Throwing and defensive weapons which he wields with skill make known his real bravery; his arms are majestic and graceful; polished gold is not more smooth or clearer than his complexion; his shoulders are broad; the blooming of the petals of the dark lotus rival with his eyes; one would believe that he is the visible and incarnated love this king that causes the merry-making of the coquetry of loved ones.

14. My father has embellished the land with elegant pillars that he erected; I myself received the baptism of the ksatriyas in the practice of battles; I go on a procession to destroy my enemies towards the Eastern land

very soon and the princes who will recognize my suzerain authority, I will established them as kings."

15. It is in these terms that the king spoke to his mother, freed from her mourning bent before her. "No my mother I cannot acquit myself towards my father by stainless mortifications; it is in the use of weapons to which I am destined that I will be able to pay an honour to his holy memory. "His mother all joyful gave him her consent.

16. The king then departed by the Eastern road and there, all that there existed of disloyal princes in the provinces of the east had to prostrate themselves and now their heads letting fall festoons and diadems; he made them docile to his orders Then a stranger to fear, like a lion shaking his profuse mane he proceeded towards the Western lands.

17. Hearing that the marquis of that place was behaving badly he shook his head

touched his arm slowly which seemed like an elephant's trunk and said proudly "if he does not come to my call he must, however, submit to my wrath. What need is there for a long discourse ? I say it in short.

18. To-day O my mother's brother, you who are dear to me, cross the Gandaki which is so large, so choppy as to vie with the ocean, with its dreadful whirlwinds and its undulating billows. Escorted by hundreds of excellent and caprisoned horses and elephants I follow your army in crossing the river. His decision taken, the king held his word.

19. Having conquered the town of Malla, he returned to his country by gradual stages; and than the heart happy he gave the Brahmaas his inexhaustible riches. And queen Rajyavati was thus spoken to with a firm voice by his virtues son: "with a serene heart, O my mother, give you also devoutly this as an offering."

(To be continued)

(Footnote to page 18, 'Nepal', vol III, by S. Levi)

1. The gesture indicated has undoubtedly the value of an attestation. It is thus that the Buddha at the hour of supreme crisis, touches the earth to take it as a witness (bhumi sparca mudra) Manu (VIII, 113) teaches that the judge "must make the ksatriya swear on his riding animal or on his weapons and the commentators cited by Bubler ad hoc explain that "the ksatriya must touch the objects indicated and say at the same time: if I lie let them become of no use to me."